

31- THE 402
Charge of Schism

Renewed against the

SEPARATISTS,

IN ANSWER

To the Renewer of that pretended
Peaceable Design,

WHICH IS

Falsly call'd, An Answer to Dr. *STILLING-
FLEET's* late Sermon,

By
Samuel Thomas



L O N D O N,

Printed for *Henry Brome*, at the Gun in *St. Paul's*
Church-Yard, 1680.

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Doctor Stillingfleet Justified.

THere was lately put into my hand, a thing call'd an [*Answer to Dr. Stillingfleet's Sermon*] (on *Phil. 3. 16.*) [*by some Non-conformists*]: The Sermon to which it pretends to be an Answer, was chiefly design'd to shew that the Non-conformists Meetings in Congregations forbidden by Law, are sinful Schismatical separations. The design of this (pretended) Answer, is to remove that Charge; which it endeavours to do by giving, 1. *A modest account of the Non-conformists Meetings.* And, 2. *Some taste of their Reasons for Non-conformity.* These are two of the three things which we are told (*p. 3.*) were design'd in that Discourse.

As to the first, The Pamphlet professes, that the Composers of it are in the number of those Non-conformists, who do not go from the Parish Church, in opposition to it, as if such Congregations were no Churches: For they expressly acknowledg, *p. 4. That our Parish Churches are true Churches; and, That it is their duty to desire and endeavour the Union and Prosperity of those Churches.*

And what (says this Author, p. 4.) would the Doctor, or any Conformist have of us more, unless it be also to joyn with them there in the participation of the Ordinances?

As if the Doctor had not plainly enough told him and his Companions in Separation, that he would have them so true to endeavour after Peace and Union

with the Parochial Churches, as to agree together with them not only in the same profession of Faith, but in submitting to the same Laws of Government, and Rules of Divine Worship. This is that which the Doctor would have them do, and he would have none of them guilty of either a total, or a frequent forbearance of Communion with this Church, or any of its particular Branches in what themselves judg lawful, nor of forming separate Congregations under other Teachers, and by other Rules than what the established Religion allows, *p. 20.* "Whereas on the contrary, of late Years, the Non-conformists, says he, have fill'd the People with greater prejudices (than formerly) against our Communion, and gather them into fixt and separate Congregations, which have proceeded to the choice of new Pastors upon the death of old ones; and except some very few, scarce any either of their Preachers, or People in *London*, come ordinarily to the publick Congregation, (*p. 22.*) Which, says the Doctor, we lament as a thing which unavoidably tends to our common Ruine, if not in time prevented; for by this means the hearts of the People are alienated from each other, &c. 'Tis this obstinate and destructive course of Separation which the Doctor design'd his Sermon against: In which he has made it his business to enervate the strength of those Pleas which are made use of by their best Writers, to justify their Separation.

To which this Pamphlet pretends to be an Answer: And yet the Author of it has not thought fit to reply particularly to any one passage therein contain'd, or to shew that what the Doctor has oppos'd to their Pleas, is either impertinent, or unsatisfactory. But instead of that he endeavours an Apology for those Schismatical Practices, by *hinting*, or *holding forth*, for I cannot say proving these Principles.

I. That

1. That 'tis the duty of those who are set apart to the Office of the Ministry, (supposing them every way to be fit and call'd) to preach the Gospel by way of discharge of that Office.

2. That when two Duties come together, so that we cannot perform the one but we must omit the other; the greater Duty must take place of the less.

3. That Hearing and Preaching being *relata*, which do mutually put and destroy one another, the Peoples meeting is authorized by their Preachers commission: And unless those Preachers do set, and keep up Conventicles, the whole generation of the Non-conformist Ministers must be laid aside from the exercise of their Office.

4. The People are bound to meet and hear those Preachers, because they are convinced in their Consciences, that they do edifie more by hearing them, and so they also have the Plea of [*greater Duty*.]

The first of these, he pretends to prove by the *Apostles* expresse Authority and Example, *who when they were threated and commanded to speak no more in Christ's Name, have left us their Answer on record, We ought to obey God rather than man.*

Which reason is impertinent and insufficient. Impertinent, 1. Because the Apostles there spoken of [St. Peter, and St. John.] had an extraordinary Commission, and Command to preach the Gospel, which our Non-conformists have not; and therefore, *supposing they were forbidden to preach it by men*, that instance would not justify the preaching it notwithstanding that Prohibition: For they can produce no Command of God, which requires them to preach it, and therefore their not preaching it would be no disobedience to God's Command: But, 2. 'Tis more impertinent upon another account, because ~~either~~ are they forbidden by the

the Magistrate to preach the Gospel, but allow'd to do it to their own Families, and to five more, and therefore they may, if they are lawfully set apart to the Office of the Ministry, exercise their preaching Talent. This instance therefore being thus impertinent to their Case, 'tis insufficient to justify their Practice.

As for his precedent of the three first Centuries, *when*, said he, *the Gospel was never preach'd, but contrary to the will of the Magistrate*: I deny that that was well done, unless the Preachers could produce some Command of God for so doing.

And therefore, for my part, I do very much approve that which this Writer calls, *A slip of the Pen*, in Dr. Tillotson's Sermon, *That any pretence of Conscience warrants any man that is not extraordinarily Commissioned as the Apostles and first Publishers of the Gospel were, and cannot justify that Commission by Miracles as they did, to affront the Established Religion of a Nation, (though it be false) and openly to draw men off from the profession of it, in contempt of the Magistrate and the Law.* This is a very great and useful truth, and I was right glad to meet with it in a Sermon preached by that Eminent Person. And the Author of this Pamphlet hath said nothing to the purpose against it.

He says, that *Affirmative Precepts bind semper, but not ad semper*: Which we would fain have pass for a Reason, why Protestants do not use to preach under the Inquisition: And tells us, *There's Prudence therefore to be used, and Preachers need not be cast where they will be certainly trampled on.* He means where *they* that cast them, will be certainly trampled on. And the truth is, if these *Pearl-casters* did foresee they should be Rent and Trampled on as they deserve, I doubt not but they would be brought (by degrees at least) to keep their precious Truths to themselves, and would be more wary

wary of Preaching in defiance of the Law that forbids them, if they were sure that the penalty of the Law would be vigorously and constantly executed upon them: And that they should get nothing by discharging their (*pretended*) Duty, but the (*deserv'd*) reward of a Gaol. But the truth is, there's Money in the case, and good store (usually) of the Wages of Unrighteousness heaped upon such Malefactors, the hope whereof tempts them to persist in the gain-saying of *Corah*; and therefore they haunt those places most, where most of this Mammon is to be met with: Which puts me in mind of a Passage in *Monsieur Balzac's* [Prince] p. 61. where reflecting on the *Spaniards* Voyages into the *Indies*: "It's their avarice, says he, makes
 "them cross the Seas, and run to the Worlds end;
 "they publish it is for the good of Souls, and the desire they have to save Infidels, that draws them thither; and yet 'tis very true, that the charity of these
 "good Christians, carries them only to those Countries where the Sun warms the Earth into Gold,
 "and is not at all employ'd toward the farthest part
 "of the Earth where there are Souls enough to be
 "Converted, but where they can only get Frost and
 "Snow.

And as for those few of *the good Christians* we are now discoursing of, that are less fond of Money because they have less need of it, having competent Estates of their own; the maintaining and keeping up a party, and the cherishing and promoting of Schism and Sedition, does *their* hearts more good than Money, and is to them a very satisfactory recompence for the *fatigues* pains they take in their *Conventicle-Preachments*.

But as for those places where they see neither of these ends can be attain'd, these *Fanatick Missionaries* will

will never believe themselves call'd to exercise their Gifts in [them] though possibly *they* may want such *edifying Preachers*, as these Men pretend themselves to be, ten times more than *London* and other Places do, where they commonly reside.

And so much for the first Principle, or Ground produc'd by this *Author*, of *Non-conformists* Preaching contrary to Law.

The second follows, which is this, that *when two Duties come together, so that we cannot perform the one but we must omit the other, the greater Duty must take place of the less*: Now the two Duties which he supposes, come together in the *Non-conformists* Case, are seeking Unity, and preaching the Gospel: *If we keep our Parish-Churches*, says he, *we must not preach the Gospel; if we preach the Gospel, we must go to private Meetings*. (Which by the way is false: For they may, and i think some few of them do, so far seek Parish-union, (at least in some places distant from *London*) as to assemble with the rest of the Parishioners, and attend the Church in the time of Divine Service, and Sermons, and then preach to their own Flock in their private Meetings afterward). But our Author instead of *proving* by sound Arguments, that for them to preach the Gospel (to more than five besides their own Family) is, 1. Their duty, 2. a greater duty than to seek the Union of the Nation, by preserving that part of it which consists in complying with Parish-Church Order, he only asks *Questions*, *Which of these is of greatest moment to the Glory of God? which is the greatest Matter, Sir?* To all his loose and indigested Talk, my Answer is briefly this, That in the case now before us, there do not come two duties together, the one whereof cannot be perform'd; for they may seek and maintain the Unity aforesaid, and yet may preach the Gospel to such a number

number as the Law allows them to preach to, and that 'tis his duty, or the duty of the rest of the Gang to preach to more, he has not yet prov'd.

The third Principle is, that *Hearing and Preaching being relata, which do mutually put and destroy one another, the Peoples meeting is authoriz'd by their Preachers Commission; and unless those Preachers do set and keep up Conventicles, the whole Generation of the Non-conformist Ministers must be laid aside from the exercise of their Office.*

To which I answer. 1. Let your Non-conformists prove, if they can, that they have any lawful Commission to preach to more than the Law allows them to preach to. For, 2. If they can shew no such Commission 'tis their duty to be silent rather than to preach to a greater number. 3. They who hear them, *may if they please*, hear other legally-authoriz'd Ministers. 4. It is *their duty* so to do: And 'tis a sin in them to promote and encourage by their presence that Faction, Schism, and Sedition, which their Preachers are guilty of by preaching against Law.

The fourth Principle which this Writer pleads in justification of the *Non-conformists*, is this, *That the People are bound to meet and hear those Preachers, because they are convinced in their Consciences that they do edifie more by hearing them, and so they also have the plea of [greater Duty.]*

Where he takes it for granted, that a man's expectation of receiving greater Edification, or his persuasion that he shall receive greater profit to his Soul by hearing *Non-conformists*, than by hearing his own *Conforming Minister*, does make it his duty to absent himself from his own *Parish Church*, and to go to a more edifying *Conventicle*: For which Principle, one would think he should have *endeavour'd* (at least) to have brought some cogent Reason; but (for ought I

see) he has not so much as *endeavour'd* it, and if he had, I dare say he could not *have effected* it; for 'tis a very false and pernicious Principle: For as much as we ought not to do evil, that any, whether lesser or greater, good may come of it. 'Tis evil to disobey Authority by transgressing those Bounds, and breaking that Order, which it prescribes. Our Law requires that every Parishioner should attend Divine Service and Sermons in his own Parish Church, and to hear and receive the Word from the mouth of his own Parish-Minister: He ought to obey that Law, and to expect salutary edification in the way of obedience to, and compliance with that Order; and he cannot well-groundedly expect, or be rightly persuaded he shall receive it in the way of breaking that Order, and wandering to other Churches and Preachers, especially such as are disallow'd by Law, for that is not God's way of giving it. He may indeed *fancy* himself more edifi'd in some respects, but 'twill in the end prove a *deluding Edification*, and he'll one day find it a *damnable thing* so to attempt greater edification in this or that part of Knowledge or Duty, as in the mean time to neglect other parts of Duty, and to do that which (whatsoever this man pretends to the contrary) must needs be (interpretatively at least) a *contempt of the Government, a neglect, and consequently discouragement of his own Minister, with scandal to his conforming Neighbours, and therefore inconsistent with the rule of Charity, Obedience, and Concord.*

Nor is this Principle *false* in it self only, but *very pernicious* too in its consequents, even as to Civils. For if a *Parishioner* may leave his own *Parish-Minister* against that Minister's will, and the will of the Civil Magistrate, *for greater Edification*, by the same reason, a Son or Daughter may on the same account, *leave their*

own Parents, and remove into another Family *against their Parents consent.*

The Son or Daughter may pretend (and too often truly plead) that their Father and Mother are unsanctifi'd Persons, that they are negligent of Religious Family-duties, and take no care to educate their Children in the fear of God, and therefore they will forsake Father and Mother, and betake themselves to some other (Godly) Family *for greater Edification*: And so this Principle would produce as great Schisms in Families as it does in Parishes: And therefore let this *greater Edification-Principle* go for a great Fallshood, and a *ruining destructive Principle.*

He talks, p. 7. Of *some universal impression that there is on the hearts of most honest People, which, says he, makes them tenderly sensible of the wrong that we have suffer'd in being turn'd out of the Vineyard for our Consciences.*

To which I answer, That 'tis a very evil thing for Non-conformists to complain of *suffering wrong* for their Consciences, and to make no conscience of *doing it.* What do these men mean by pretending they were *turn'd out of the Vineyard for their Consciences*? The case was this, When after the King's Restauration, the Parliament upon due consideration of *the horrid Mischiefs and sad Calamities*, the Land had groan'd under for several Years, and likewise of *the more horrid Principles* which occasion'd those Mischiefs and Calamities, both in Church and State, thought themselves oblig'd to prevent the like for the future, they agree'd upon an *Act of Uniformity* to that end, wherein the *Peace and Tranquility of the State* was endeavour'd to be secur'd, by enjoining the renunciation of such *seditions and destructive Maxims*, as had before disturb'd and ruin'd it: And the *prosperity and good order of the Church* provided for, by imposing the Book of Common-Prayer, and requiring

assent and consent to the use of the Matters contain'd and prescrib'd in that Book: To which Renunciation and Imposition the Act oblig'd all those to submit, who did then, or had at any time a mind to enjoy any Church-Living, Promotion, or Lecture, in this Nation. To which Act many men that had then Ecclesiastical Livings, either could not, or would not Conform: And this they call *being turn'd out of the Vineyard for their Consciences*. When as the truth is, *They turn'd themselves out*; being tempted and prevailed upon so to do, either by their blind and deluded Understandings, and misguided Consciences, which would not let some of them see the lawfulness of that requir'd submission and compliance, though they had studi'd and examin'd things in order to it, or else by their perverse and stubborn Spirits, being resolv'd before-hand not to comply, because they thought it would be too great a dishonour to them to contradict their former Principles and Practices, and too great a scandal to the *Godly party*, for their Leaders to backslide, and abandon the goodly Reformation they had been endeavouring and carrying on for so many Years.

'Sir, For my own part I must needs confess to you, that I
'never did so much as take it into consideration whether I should
'yield or not yield to what was requir'd in the Act for Unifor-
'mity; and that because, 1. Being fully satisfi'd, by occasion
'of the more serious weighing of such Points in these latter
'days, of the unlawfulness of those things which in my youn-
'ger years I had conform'd readily to, upon little better ground
'than the example and encouragement of others, I was brought
'(I hope heartily and sincerely) to bewail before God my for-
'mer conforming to many things, and therefore durst not
'think of returning to that, for which I had formerly in such
'a solemn penitential way judg'd my self before the Lord my
'God. And, 2. Because being now so far gone in years,
'that

' that I am come to Jacob's must die, I cannot live much longer ;
 ' I was not willing to do any thing that was scrupulous and
 ' doubtful, lest upon my Death bed it should prove an occasion of
 ' any disquiet, or disturbance to me ; yet withal I must add,
 ' That it was some farther satisfaction to me, when I found
 ' that the very same things that seem'd most dreadful to me,
 ' have also sway'd most with you in keeping you off from the
 ' Conformity requir'd: Namely, 1. Those great words too
 ' big for my swallow, of unfeigned assent and consent. And,
 ' 2. The doing of any thing that is contrary to that Covenanted
 ' Reformation which we had so long and earnestly pray'd and
 ' labour'd for, or that might be scandalous to those that joy'd
 ' in the first-fruits of it, and do still desire and endeavour to
 ' promote it.

These are the very words of that prime, leading,
 London-Non-conformist, old Arthur Jackson, in a letter of
 his, which I have still to shew under his own hand,
 dated February 26. 62. And I doubt not but most of the
 Tribe turn'd themselves out of the Vineyard upon the same
 Temptations, and yet these men have the confidence to
 cry out of the wrong they have suffer'd in being turn'd out
 by others. Which is just as if the Romish Priests should
 complain of the wrong they suffer'd by being turn'd and
 kept out of England (which was once such a fruitful
 Vineyard to them) because such Oaths, and Renuncia-
 tions, were impos'd upon them, and requir'd to be
 made and taken by them (for the securing of the Na-
 tion against their Treasonable, and Seditious Princi-
 ples) as their Consciences could not comply with.
 And yet our Author pleads for the Law's just severity
 against them, p. 32. of this Pamphlet ; where he tells
 us, That the Supremacy of the Pope, and the Authority of
 the Kings, are inconsistent in this Land, — and that the
 Priest and Jesuite are taken by Law, as Factors for the Pope, —
 and an undermining the Government, is, says he, in all
 States,

States a capital Crime. Even so say I. The Authority of the *King*, and the owning of those Principles required to be disclaim'd in the Act for Uniformity, are inconsistent in this Land, and therefore that they who will not disown and declare against those Principles, are taken by Law as Factors for another Schism and Rebellion, and as Persons that design *again* to undermine our Government *Civil* and *Ecclesiastical*, and an *undermining the Government is in all States a capital Crime*, and well had it been for this Nation, if *such an undermining of it had been made Capital in ours*; so far am I from being of this Author's mind (in his *saucy Insinuations* in this Page) that 'twas *wrong and iniquity* in our Governours to make *such a Law* (for the good of the Nation) as *accidentally occasion'd* these *Apologists* to *reject themselves out of their Ecclesiastical enjoyments*.

To these Apologies of theirs for preaching against Law, they presume it will be said by the Episcopal Party [*But you may Conform.*] If so, say they, *we must then desire one or both, of these Learned, Moderate, and Judicious Doctors* (Stillington, and Tillotson) *to contribute but this one thing towards it, to answer the ensuing Objections, those especially which concern the Political part of Conformity about the Oxford Oath and Subscription.* For, say they, *if there be but one particular impos'd upon us as a condition of Conformity, which we prove to be sinful, and they cannot refuse it; there's no man has been more forward than Dr. Stillington, to let us know out of Hales, That 'tis not the Refuser but the Imposer, is guilty of the Schism.*

That which Mr. Hales said, is this, *That there is a Schism in which only one party is the Schismatick; for where the cause of Schism is necessary, there not he that separates, but he that is the cause of separation, is the Schismatick.*

But with the leave of that great man, and of another that *opines* according to that dictate, I do deny
that

that there can be *any necessary cause* of Schism; for all Schism is sinful, and there can be no necessary cause of Sin. 2. The Paragraph is *non-sense*, if we should accept of Mr. Hales his own definition of Schism: For, says he, *Schism if we would define it, is nothing else but an unnecessary separation of Christians, from that part of the Visible Church whereof they were once Members*: The Paragraph then must be thus Paraphras'd. There is a Schism in which only one party is the Schismatick; for where the cause of Schism, *that is, of unnecessary separation of Christians, is necessary*, there not he that separates, but he that is the cause of separation is the Schismatick. The *Non-sense* whereof appears in its own light. 3. 'Tis *absurd* upon another account; for himself grants, that what *Sedition* or *Rebellion* is in the *State*, and in reference to *Civils*, that Schism is in the *Church*, and in reference to *Ecclesiastical* union. He may as well say therefore, that where cause of *Rebellion* is necessary, there not *he that Rebels*, but he that *is the cause of rebellion* is the *Rebel*; which is very pretty when it happens at any time that the *Supreme Governour* proves a *Tyrant*: And so upon that (or any other less account) is the *pretended cause* of his Subjects *Rebelling*: Indeed, a *necessary cause* he cannot be, let him be never so great a *Tyrant*: But that makes that *Dictate* which this Author would persuade us the *Doctor* makes *so much* use of, but *does not*, nor I believe *can* he tell us *where*, so much the more absurd.

That Tract of Schism tells us, That *when either false or uncertain Conclusions are obtruded for truth, and acts either unlawful, or ministring just scruple, are required of us to be perform'd, in these cases consent were Conspiracy; and open contestation is not Faction or Schism, but due Christian Animosity.*

I shall not stay to question the truth of this Assertion, as to those parts of it [*or uncertain*] and [*or ministring just scruple*]: But though (I should allow him that) in those cases *consent were Conspiracy*, yet *open contestation* against our proper Governours may be *sinful*. He has not told us what he means by the Expression; nor what sort and kind, what measures and degrees of *open Contestation* he intended; but I affirm, there's a *medium* between *consent*, and *open Contestation*; and that is an humble and modest Refusal to comply with those impos'd Propositions or Actions, which upon due enquiry, and diligent examination, we judg untrue, or unlawful; and humbly and meekly tendring our Reasons if required, why we so judg. That any greater *Contestation* then this amounts to, of *Subjects* against *their Governours*, is in any case necessary or lawful, is more than I believe can be prov'd. I am sure if the *Contestation* be so open, and proceed so far as either to set up another *Bishop* in opposition to the former, or to *erect a new Church*, or Oratory for the dividing Part to meet in publickly, Mr. Hales himself pronounces such separations *compleat Schisms*, and till this be done, *the Schism* he tells us, *is but yet in the womb*. And, as he goes on, *In that famous Controversie in Holland, De Prædestinatione & Auxiliis*; *As long as the disagreeing Parties went no further than Disputes and Pen-combats, the Schism was all that while un-hatch'd*; but as soon as one Party swept an old Cloyster, and by a pretty Art suddenly made it a Church, by putting a new Pulpit in it for the separating Party there to meet: Now what before was a *Controversie*, became a *formal Schism*. Whence it follows that even in this man's judgment, our Non-conforming Barn-sweepers, and (in them) *Pulpit-er Ekers*, in order to meeting and preaching against Law, are *formal Schismatics*. To the same purpose, Arthur Jackson aforesaid, in the same Letter before quoted

quoted has these words, — *I confess I dread the falling upon the Rock of Separation; but as long as I desire not to set up a new Church, but am willing to joyn with the Publick Assemblies in Hearing and Prayer, and only withdraw from what is not of Scripture-Institution; I hope this partial Non-communication cannot be justly called Separation.*

In the same Tract, Mr. Hales asserts, 'That it is not lawful, no not for Prayer, or Hearing, for Conference, or any other Religious Office whatsoever, for People to assemble, otherwise than by publick Order is allow'd; neither, says he, may we complain of this in times of Incorruption: For why should men desire to do that suspiciously in private which may warrantably be perform'd in publick? And in another part of the same Treatise, 'What, says he, if those to whom the execution of the publick Service is committed, do some thing either unseemly, or suspicious, or peradventure unlawful? What if the Garments they wear be censured, which indeed be, superstitious? What if the gesture of Adoration be us'd to the Altars?— what if the Homilist have preach'd, or deliver'd, any Doctrine of the Truth whereof we are not well persuaded? A thing which very often falls out, yet we may not Separate, except we be constrain'd personally to bear a part in them our selves. The Priests under Eli had so ill demean'd themselves about the daily Sacrifice, that the Scripture tells us they made them to stink, yet the People refus'd not to come to the Tabernacle, nor to bring their Sacrifice to the Priest. For in those Schisms which concern Fact, nothing can be a just cause of refusing Communion, but only to require the execution of some unlawful, or suspected Act. Thus he, which passage by the way may serve for a rebuke to these mens greater-edification-Argument, before insisted on.

But because that expression [or suspected Act] comes trumping in our way again, I shall here take so much notice of it, as to acquaint the Reader, if he know it

not already, that not only *very considerable Episcopal men*, but *some Presbyterians* too, are so far from thinking, that Governours requiring men to do an A& which they scruple or suspect the lawfulness of, is a just ground for Separation, that they deny it to be a just ground for non-performance of that A& ; and on the contrary assert it men's duty in that case to do the thing commanded. So the French Presbyterian Divines, and Professors at Saumur, (*Thes. Salmur. de summo Controvers. Judice, Sect. 46.*) *Sane quum demonstrari non potest id quod jubetur aut statuitur repugnare regula à Deo tradita, acquiescendum esse definitioni non negamus, vel ob hoc ipsum quod sic ab iis qui ordine legitimo constituti sunt definitum est, quos decet & vero simile est esse reliquis prudentiores, & perspicaciores.* To the same purpose, Baxter in his *Disput. of Church-Government*, p. 484. 'As an erroneous judgment will not, says he, excuse us from disobedience to our Governours, so much less will a doubtfulness excuse us. If upon advising with our Teachers we remain in doubt about the lawfulness of some circumstance of Order— if it may not be dispens'd with without a greater injury to the Church, or cause of God, than our Dispensation will countervail, then is it our duty to obey our Teachers, notwithstanding such doubts; for it being their Office to teach us, it must be our duty to believe them with an Humane Faith, in cases where we have no evidences to the contrary; and the duty of obeying them being certain, and the sinfulness of the thing commanded being uncertain, and unknown, and only suspected, we must go on the surer side.

'Tis time now to return to our Apologists, who, I think, have got nothing by tempting me by that Quotation out of Hales, to consult the Author himself; since the other Dictates which I met with on this occasion in the same Treatise, involve their separated, forbidden, Meetings for publick Worship in Anti-Churches of their own, in the guilt of Schism, and make the worshippers there formal Schismatics.

That

That some notions in the latter part of this very Pamphlet, contribute very much to the proving those men Schismaticks, whom the former part would excuse from that Crime. For, p. 31. thus we read, 'It is not all separation or division is Schism, but sinful Division. Now the Supreme Authority as National Head, having appointed the Parochial Meetings, and requir'd all the Subjects of the Land to frequent them, and them alone, for the Acknowledging, Glorifying, or National Serving and worshipping the one only true God, and his Son, whom we have generally receiv'd, and this worship or Service in the nature of it being intrinsically good, and the external Order, such as that of Time, and Place, and the like Circumstances, being properly under his Jurisdiction, it hath seem'd to us hitherto, that unless there was something in that Order and way prescrib'd which is sinful, and that requir'd too as a condition of that Communion, there's no man could refuse his attendance universally on these Parochial Assemblies without the sin of disobedience, and consequently his separation thereby becoming sinful, proves Schism. But, says he, if the Scene be alter'd, and those separate Assemblies made legal, the Schism in reference to the National Church, upon the same account doth vanish. Schism is a separation from that Church whereof we ought, or are bound to be Members: If the Supreme Authority then loose our Obligation to the Parish-Meeting so that we are bound no longer, the Iniquity (we say upon this account) is not to be found, and the Schism gone.

From which premises this Conclusion does evidently follow: That until the Supreme Authority loosens the Obligation of Parishioners to the Parish-Meeting, they ought and are bound to behave themselves as Members of their respective Parishes, and not

to separate from them. For if they do 'tis an unlawful separation, that is, 'tis *Schism*.

He says indeed, that no man could refuse his attendance [*universally*] on Parochial Assemblies without the sin of disobedience: To which I say,
 1. That however then they who do *universally refuse their attendance*, which I presume a very great number, if not much the greater part of *Conventicles* do, must be accounted *Schismatics* by his own Doctrine. 2. If an universal non-attendance on Parish-Assemblies be a sinful separation, and consequently Schism, *because 'tis a sin of disobedience*, then every particular absence, and non-attendance upon them is sinful, and consequently Schismatical, *because 'tis a sin of disobedience* (in Ecclesiastical Matters) against that Authority which requires the Parishioners of this Nation not only *frequently* but *constantly*, to attend their own Parish Churches.

Now if being thus press'd, he shall think fit to fly off from his words, and to say, That if the Supreme Authority requires all the Subjects to *frequent* the Parochial Meetings, *and those only*, they who do not *frequent* them, but betake themselves to other Assemblies are guilty of such a *degree of disobedience* as will amount to Schism, then if any of those Subjects do (*but*) *frequent* Conventicles, (though they are not *universally* there, but are *sometimes* present at their *own Churches*) they must be granted to be Schismatics; and if so, he agrees at last with that Doctor and that Sermon, which he pretends to Answer: In which for ought I observe, the most that Dr. *Stillingfleet* contends for, is, That all who own our *Parish Churches* as *true Churches*, would not either *totally*, or *ordinarily*, forbear Communion with them in those things which they judg lawful; nor proceed

to form separate Congregations under other Teachers, and by other Rules than what the establish'd Religion allows, (p. 20.) whereas (as he complains, p. 22.) *Except some very few, scarce any either of the dissenting Preachers or People in London, come ordinarily to the publick Congregations*; upon which account he charges them with Schism; in which guilt this very Author does (for ought I see) involve them in this very Pamphlet, which was design'd to vindicate them from that Guilt.

To which Pamphlet I shall say no more at present, because I have already reply'd to all that part of it in which the *Doctor's* Sermon is concern'd: For the following parts of it which are taken up in Apologizing for their *Preachers Non-conformity*, and their refusing to comply with those things which are impos'd upon them, to make them *Legal Ministers* of this Church and Nation, are perfectly alien and impertinent to Dr. *Stillingfleet's* Sermon.

In the 19th P. whereof he himself professes, that he did not intend to speak of the Terms upon which Persons are to be admitted among us, to the exercise of the Function of the Ministry, but of the Terms of Lay-Communion, that is, those which are necessary for all Persons to joyn in our Prayers and Sacraments, and other Offices of Divine worship.— Some of the most impartial of the Dissenters themselves confessing, That very little is to be said on the behalf of the Peoples separating; from whom none of those Subscriptions, or Declarations are requir'd, that are requir'd of those that would be Authoriz'd Preachers. So that the People, says he, are condemn'd in their separation by their own Teachers; But how they can preach lawfully to a People who commit a fault in hearing them, the Doctor professes not to understand. An opposite Answer to which one passage of the *Doctor's*

*Et*or's Sermon would have been more to the purpose, than all that these *Apologists* say for themselves in this Pamphlet. In which they have not been so kind as to assist the *Doctor's* Intellectuals in this matter, by making any other Apologies for the Peoples separating, than what have been already Answer'd; and therefore I have done the Task I undertook in reference to that Sermon; and shall not (at this time at least) take any notice of the Objections made by this Author, in behalf of *their Preachers*, to the Re-ordination, Declaration, and Subscription, requir'd in the Act for Uniformity, nor manifest the *Blunders*, *Falshoods*, and *Impertinencies* contain'd in those Objections.

FINIS.

Henry Brome's Advertisement, 1680.

W Hereas there are several Discourses and Pamphlets abroad in the World, that pass for the Writings of Mr. Roger L'Estrange; wherein he never had any hand at all: This is to Advertise the Reader, that he hath lately Published these following Pieces, (all but the Three last) and no other.

Toleration Discuss'd, in a Dialogue betwixt a *Conformist* and a *Non-conformist*, and betwixt a *Presbyterian* and an *Independent*.

Seneca's Morals Abstracted.

The Guide to Eternity.

Tully's Offices, in English.

Twenty Select Colloquies of Erasmus in English.

Tyranny and Popery, Lording it over the Consciences and Lives of the King and People.

The Reformed Catholick.

The History of the Plot, in Folio.

The Free born Subject.

The Case put for the Duke of York.

An Answer to the Appeal.

Seasonable Memorials.

The Parallel, or, The Growth of Knavery.

A Dialogue betwixt a Citizen and Bumpkin.

A Dialogue betwixt a Citizen and Bumpkin, the second Part.

A further Discovery of the Plot, with a Letter to Dr. Titus Oates.

An Answer to a Letter of Libellers.

The Gentleman Apothecary.

Five Love-Letters Translated.

Discovery on Discovery in a second Letter to Dr. Titus Oates.

The Committee, or, Popery in Masquerade, curiously done in a Copper-Plate.

Narrative of the Plot.

The Way of Peace.

The Arts and Pernicious Designs of Rome.

The Conspiracy of Atheism and Schism.